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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/709,813	05/28/2004	Tim Makos	27475/05355	3812

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EXAMINER

WINNER, TONY H

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3611

DATE MAILED: 02/11/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/709,813

Applicant(s)

MAKOS ET AL.

Examiner

Tony H. Winner

Art Unit

3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 November 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 19 and 20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 11-18 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,7,8 and 10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3-6 and 9 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11/26/04 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6/24/04
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

Election

1. Applicants elect species I without traverse is acknowledged. Claims 1-18 are readable on the elected species, corresponding to figures 1-5. Claims 19-20 are withdrawn from consideration. An action on the merits follows.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 1, 11, and 14 are objected to because of the following informalities:

The wording of claim 1 " a locking cylinder disposed with said coupler housing" seems incorrect because the locking cylinder is not a separate component but an assemble unit that disposed within the coupler housing. Is the applicant intent to use the word "within" instead of "with"?

Claims 11 and 24 recites " a locking cylinder disposed within a coupled to a cam" is incomplete. It appears the recitation should be -- a locking cylinder disposed within a coupler housing and coupled to a cam --.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States

only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Li (US. patent 6,666,051 B1).

Li discloses a vehicle coupler comprising:

- a. a coupler housing (30);
- b. a locking cylinder (32) disposed within the coupler housing and mechanically coupled to a plurality of engagement pins; wherein rotation of said lock cylinder moves said engagement pins between two positions, a first position wherein said plurality of engagement pins extend beyond said coupler housing and a second position wherein said plurality of engagement pins do not extend beyond said coupler housing.

With regard to claims 2, 7, 8, and 10 Li discloses all of the claimed limitations.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 3-6 and 9 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

5. Claims 11-18 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the claims objection in paragraph 2. Claims 1-18 are allowed because the prior art neither shows nor teaches a vehicle coupler/hitch assembly with all the intricate interconnecting/working structure of the claimed limitations.


Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Li ('781 B1), Li ('000 B1), Lee ('181 B1), Hahka ('261 B1), Gonzalez et al. ('927 B1), Schotthoefer (711), and Menzie ('237) are cited of interest.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Anthony H. Winner whose telephone number is (703) 306-5957. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley Morris, can be reached at (703) 308-0629. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

8. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information-Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.


TONY WINNER
PATENT EXAMINER
2/8/05